Soviets, Israel Upgrade Relations

The Associated Press

UNITED NATIONS – Israel and the Soviet Union announced Sunday that they are opening consulates in each other's countries after a 23-year break in ties.

The decision, announced after a meeting between Israeli Foreign Minister David Levy and his Soviet counterpart, Eduard Shevardnadze, represented a major step in restoring relations that were severed after the 1967 Middle East War.

Consular relations are a level below full diplomatic relations.

The two ministers also told reporters at the United Nations that they intend to start meeting regularly and that their foreign ministries will be in regular contact.

The Kremlin broke ties with Israel after the 1967 war, during which Israel seized territory from Moscow's Arab allies.

The two countries began thawing their contacts in 1987, when the Soviets posted a delegation in Tel Aviv that operated through the Finnish Embassy.

A year later, Israel established a low-level mission in Moscow operating through the Netherlands Embassy.

Relations have improved in part because Moscow wants to play a role in Middle East diplomacy.

Asked about word from Israeli officials that Soviet President Mikhail S. Gorbachev has authorized direct flights between the Soviet Union and Israel, Shevardnadze said that was a complicated issue to be discussed further.

A spokesman for Israeli Prime Minister Yitzhak Shamir announced in Jerusalem on Saturday that the flights would begin in a month. They were expected to accelerate the emigration of Soviet Jews to Israel.

Levy and Shevardnadze met for an hour in the chambers of the U.N. Security Council president, the rotating post occupied by the Soviet Union for the month of September.

The two leaders arrived separately, Levy solemn-faced and declining comment.

"We have decided – and I am happy to report this – to establish full consular ties between our two countries," Levy told Israel radio.

Shevardnadze told nearly reporters that Israel would be opening a consulate-general, the highest level consulate, in Moscow, and the Soviet Union would open a consulate-general in Tel Aviv.

U.S.S.R., S. Korea Establish Full Relations In Diplomatic Blow to Communist N. Korea

The Associated Press

UNITED NATIONS – The Soviet Union and South Korea established full diplomatic relations Sunday in what was seen as a major victory for the Seoul government and a devastating setback for Communist North Korea.

The Soviet Union has been a major ally and arms provider for North Korea.

Soviet Foreign Minister Eduard Shevardnadze and his South Korean counterpart, Choi Ho-joong, signed an agreement establishing the ties, issued a joint communique and stood together in a U.N. corridor, smiling and answering questions.

"We have agreed to establish diplomatic relations between the Soviet Union and South Korea as of today," Choi later told a news conference.

He said both sides had agreed to an exchange of high-level visits, possibly by heads of state, but no date was set. He said a Soviet trade and economic delegation will visit Seoul next month to discuss broad economic cooperation.

"We believe that establishing diplomatic relations between the Soviet Union and South Korea will aid the cause of stability in Asia and the Pacific region," Shevardnadze told reporters. He called South Korea an important factor for peace in the region.

There was no immediate comment from North Korean diplomats here. The move was widely seen as a diplomatic blow to Pyongyang, which has become increasingly isolated amid the recent trends elsewhere toward democracy and liberalization.

South Korea has long been pushing for ties with the Soviet Union, and Moscow has been eager for enhanced trade and economic cooperation to help bolster the sinking Soviet economy.

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Happy 40th Birthday, Charlie Brown and the Peanuts Gang

The Associated Press

NEW YORK – Good grief: The Peanuts gang is turning 40.

The images are embedded in American popular culture: Charlie Brown trying to kick a football, Snoopy gunning for the Red Baron and Lucy dispensing psychiatric advice, a nickel's worth at a time.

Now it's time to celebrate.

On Oct. 2, 1950, "Peanuts" made its debut in seven newspapers, and good ol' Charlie Brown and his beguiling beagle were on their way to becoming an international phenomenon.

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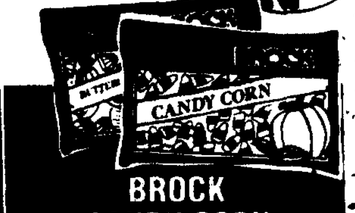
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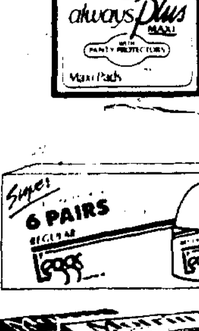
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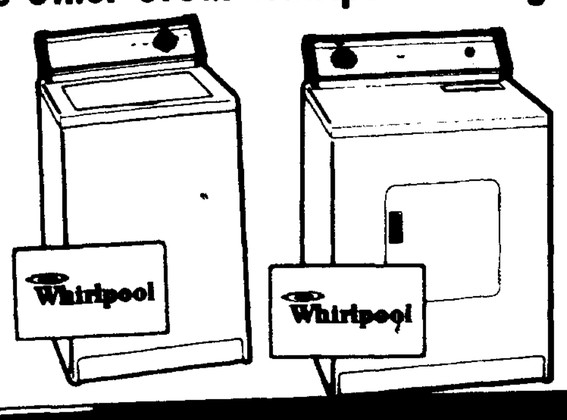
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